Rusyn language

Rusyn (/ˈruːsɪn/;[14] Carpathian Rusyn: русиньскый язык (*rusîn'skyj jazyk*), русиньска бесїда (*rusîn'ska bes'ida*); Pannonian Rusyn: руски язик (*ruski jazik*), руска бешеда (*ruska bešeda*)),[15] also known in English as **Ruthene** (UK: /rʊˈθiːn/, US: /ruːˈθiːn/;[16] sometimes **Ruthenian**), is an East Slavic language spoken by the Rusyns of Eastern Europe.

There are several controversial theories about the nature of Rusyn as a language or dialect. Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian, as well as American and some Polish and Serbian linguists treat it as a distinct language[17] (with its own ISO 639-3 code), whereas other scholars (especially in Ukraine but also Poland, Serbia, and Romania) treat it as a Southwestern dialect of Ukrainian.[18][19]

Rusyn
русиньскый язык; руски язик *rusîn'skyj jazyk; ruski jazik*

Ethnicity	Rusyns
Native speakers	623,500 (2000–2006)[1] Census population: 70,000. These are numbers from national official bureaus for statistics: Slovakia – 33,482[2] Serbia – 15,626[3] Poland – 10,000[4] Ukraine – 6,725[5] Croatia – 2,337[6] Hungary – 1,113[7] Czech Republic – 777[8]

Language family	Indo-European
	• Balto-Slavic
	  • Slavic
	    • East Slavic
	      • **Rusyn**

Writing system	Cyrillic script (Rusyn alphabets) Latin script (Slovakia)[9]
Official status	
Recognised minority language in	🇨🇿 Czech Republic 🇭🇺 Hungary[10] 🇵🇱 Poland[11]

Contents

Geographical distribution

Pannonian Rusyn is spoken in Vojvodina in Serbia and part of Croatia.

Carpathian Rusyn is spoken in:

- the Transcarpathian Region of Ukraine
- northeastern Slovakia
- Poland (traditionally in the southeast, but now mainly scattered throughout the north and west[20]). The Rusyn variety of Poland is generally known as *Lemko* (лемківскій язык *lemkivskij jazyk*),[21] after the characteristic word лем (*lem*) meaning "only", "but", and "like"
- Hungary (where the people and language are called *ruszin* in Hungarian)
- northern Maramureş, Romania, where the people are called *Ruteni* and the language *Ruteană* in Romanian

Classification

The classification and identification of Rusyn is historically and politically problematic. Before World War I, Rusyns were recognized as the Ukrainians of Galicia within the Austro-Hungarian Empire; however, in the Hungarian part they were recognized as Rusyns/Ruthenes. Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand had planned to recognize a Rusyn-majority area as one of the states of a planned United States of Greater Austria before his assassination. After the war, the former Austria and Hungary was partitioned, and Carpathian Ruthenia was appended to the new Czechoslovak state as its easternmost province. With the advent of World War II, Carpatho-Ukraine declared its independence, lasting not even one day, until its occupation and annexation by Hungary. After the war, the region was annexed by the Soviet Union as part of the Ukrainian SSR, which proceeded with an anti-ethnic assimilation program. Poland did the same, using internal exile to move all Ukrainians from the southern homelands to western areas incorporated from Germany, and switch everyday language to Polish.

Official usage of Pannonian Rusyn in Vojvodina, Serbia.

Scholars with the former Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies in Moscow (now the Institute of Slavonic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences) formally re-acknowledged Rusyn as a separate language in 1992, and trained specialists to study the language.[22] These studies were financially supported by the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Ukrainian politicians do not recognise Rusyns as a separate ethnicity, regardless of Rusyn self-identification. Ukraine officially considers Rusyn a dialect of Ukrainian, related to the Hutsul dialect of Ukrainian.

It is not possible to estimate accurately the number of fluent speakers of Rusyn; however, their number is estimated in the tens of thousands.

Serbia has recognized Rusyn, more precisely Pannonian Rusyn, as an official minority language.[23] Since 1995, Rusyn has been recognized as a minority language in Slovakia, enjoying the status of an official language in municipalities where more than 20 percent of the inhabitants speak Rusyn.[24]

Rusyn is listed as a protected language by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia and Romania.

Grammars and codification

Early grammars include Dmytrij Vyslockij's (Дмитрий Вислоцкий) *Карпаторусский букварь (Karpatorusskij bukvar') Vanja Hunjanky* (1931),[25] Metodyj Trochanovskij's *Буквар. Перша книжечка для народных школ. (Bukvar. Perša knyžečka dlja narodnıx škol.)* (1935).,[26][27] and Ivan Harajda (1941).[28] The archaic Harajda's grammar is currently promoted in the Rusyn Wikipedia, although part of the articles are written using other standards (see below).

Currently, there are three codified varieties of Rusyn:

- the Presov variety in Slovakia (ongoing codification since 1995[29]). A standard grammar was proposed in 1995 by Vasyl Jabur, Anna Plíšková and Kvetoslava Koporová. its orthography is largely based on Zhelekhivka, a late XIX century variety of the Ukrainian alphabet.
- The Lemko variety in Poland. A standard grammar and dictionary were proposed in 2000 by Mirosława Chomiak and Henryk Fontański.[30]
- the Pannonian Rusyn in Serbia and Croatia is significantly different from the above two in vocabulary and grammar features. It was first standardized in 1923 by G. Kostelnik. The modern standard has been developed since 1980s by Julian Ramać, Helena Medješi and Mikhajlo Fejsa (Serbia), and Mihály Káprály (Hungary).

Apart from these codified varieties, there are publications using a mixture of these standards (most notably in Hungary and in Transcarpathian Ukraine), as well as attempts to revitalize the pre-war etymological orthography with old Cyrillic letters (most notably ѣ, or *yat'*); the latter can be observed in multiple edits in the Rusyn Wikipedia, where various articles represent various codified varieties.

Phonology

Consonants

		Labial	Dental/Alveolar		Post-alveolar		Velar	Glottal
			hard	soft	hard	soft		
Nasal		m	n	nʲ				
Stop	voiceless	p	t	tʲ			k	
	voiced	b	d	dʲ			g	
Affricate	voiceless		t͡s	t͡sʲ	t͡ʃ			
	voiced		d͡z	d͡zʲ	d͡ʒ			
Fricative	voiceless	f	s	sʲ	ʃ	(ʃʲ)	x	h
	voiced	v	z	zʲ	ʒ	(ʒʲ)		
Rhotic			r	rʲ				
Approximant	lateral		l	lʲ				
	central	(w)				j		

The [w] sound only exists within alteration of [v]. However, in the Lemko variety, the [w] sound also represents the non-palatalized L, as is the case with the Polish ł.

A soft consonant combination sound [ʃ ʲt͡ʃ ʲ] exists more among the northern and western dialects. In the eastern dialects the sound is recognized as [ʃ ʲ ʃ ʲ], including the area on which the standard dialect is based. It is noted that a combination sound like this one, could have evolved into a soft fricative sound [ʃ ʲ].[31]

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
	ɪ		ʏ
Mid	ɛ		o
Open		a	

The Carpathian Rusyn alphabets

Each of the three Rusyn standard varieties has its own Cyrillic alphabet. The table below shows the alphabet of Slovakia (Prešov) Rusyn. The alphabet of the other Carpathian Rusyn standard, Lemko (Poland) Rusyn, differs from it only by lacking ё and ї. For the Pannonian Rusyn alphabet, see Pannonian Rusyn language#Writing system.

Letters of the Carpathian Rusyn alphabets[32]

Capital	Small	Name	Translit.	Pronunciation	Notes
А	а	а	a	/a/	
Б	б	бэ	b	/b/	
В	в	вэ	v	/v/	
Г	г	гэ	h	/ɦ/	
Ґ	ґ	ґэ	g	/g/	
Д	д	дэ	d	/d/	
Е	е	е	e	/e/	
Є	є	є	je/'e	/je/	
Ё	ё	ё	jo/'o	/jo/	**not present in Lemko Rusyn** or Pannonian Rusyn
Ж	ж	жы	ž	/ʒ/	
З	з	зы	z	/z/	
І	і	і	i	/i/	not present in Pannonian Rusyn
Ї	ї	ї	ji/'i	/ji/	**not present in Lemko Rusyn**
И	и	и	î	/ɪ/	the Pannonian Rusyn alphabet places this letter directly after з, like the Ukrainian alphabet
Ы	ы	ы	y	/ɨ/	not present in Pannonian Rusyn
Й	й	йы	j	/j/	
К	к	кы	k	/k/	
Л	л	лы	l	/l/	
М	м	мы	m	/m/	
Н	н	ны	n	/n/	
О	о	о	o	/o/	
П	п	пы	p	/p/	
Р	р	ры	r	/r/	
С	с	сы	s	/s/	
Т	т	ты	t	/t/	
У	у	у	u	/u/	
Ф	ф	фы	f	/f/	
Х	х	хы	ch	/x/	
Ц	ц	цы	c	/t͡s/	
Ч	ч	чы	č	/t͡ʃ/	
Ш	ш	шы	š	/ʃ/	
Щ	щ	щы	šč	/ʃt͡ʃ/	
Ю	ю	ю	ju/'u	/ju/	
Я	я	я	ja/'a	/ja/	
Ь	ь	мнягкый	'	/ʲ/	"Soft Sign": marks the preceding consonant as

		знак (ірь)			palatalized (soft)
Ъ	ъ	твердый знак (ір)			"Hard Sign": marks the preceding consonant as NOT palatalized (hard). Not present in Pannonian Rusyn

Until World War II, the letter Ѣ ѣ (їтъ or *yat'*) was used, and was pronounced /ji/ or /i/. This letter is still used in part of the articles in the Rusyn Wikipedia.

Number of letters and relationship to the Ukrainian alphabet

The Prešov Rusyn alphabet of Slovakia has 36 letters. It includes all the letters of the Ukrainian alphabet plus ё, ы, and ъ.

The Lemko Rusyn alphabet of Poland has 34 letters. It includes all the Ukrainian letters with the exception of ї, plus ы and ъ.

The Pannonian Rusyn alphabet has 32 letters, namely all the Ukrainian letters except i.

Alphabetical order

The Rusyn alphabets all place ь after я, as the Ukrainian alphabet did until 1990. The vast majority of Cyrillic alphabets place ь before э (if present), ю, and я.

The Lemko and Prešov Rusyn alphabets place ъ at the very end, while the vast majority of Cyrillic alphabets place it after щ. They also place ы before й, while the vast majority of Cyrillic alphabets place it after ш, щ (if present), and ъ (if present).

In the Prešov Rusyn alphabet, i and ї come before и, and likewise, i comes before и in the Lemko Rusyn alphabet (which doesn't have ї). In the Ukrainian alphabet, however, и precedes i and ї, and the Pannonian Rusyn alphabet (which doesn't have i) follows this precedent by placing и before ї.

Newspapers

- *Karpatska Rus'*
- *Русинська бесіда*
- *Народны новинкы*
- *Podkarpatská Rus – Подкарпатська Русь* ("")
- *Amerikansky Russky Viestnik* †
- *Lemko* (Philadelphia, USA) †
- *Руснаци у Швеце – Rusnaci u Svece*[33]
- Руске слово - [1] (http://www.ruskeslovo.com) (Serbia, Ruski Kerestur)
- Lem.fm - [34] (Poland, Gorlice)

See also

- Besida
- Alexander Duchnovič's Theatre
- Eastern Slovak dialects
- Old Ruthenian

- Pannonian Rusyns
- Rusyns
- Petro Trochanowski, contemporary Rusyn poet
- Metodyj Trochanovskij, Lemko Grammarian

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External links

- The World Academy of Rusyn Culture (http://www.rusynacademy.sk/english/en-academy.html)
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